

# VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

JUNE/JULY 2018

**JAN DILS**   
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, L C



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## The VA Takes a Significant Step to Improve Correspondence With Veterans.

Communications with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can be time consuming and frustrating for our Veterans and their families. But changes are in the works. As a part of the VA's ongoing improvement of managing taxpayer dollars, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has deployed the Centralized Benefits Communications Management Program (CBCM) nationally.

The program represents a new centralized printing and mailing process system designed to improve productivity and streamline correspondence with Veterans on compensation benefits and pension burial claims.

"CBCM is one of many great examples of how VA continually explores ways to update outdated processes," said Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "With this program, we took proven industry practices and adapted them to our needs."

**"CBCM is one of many great examples of how VA continually explores ways to update outdated processes"**

-Robert Wilkie,  
Acting VA Secretary

Prior to CBCM, which went into effect March 23, VBA's 56 regional offices were responsible individually for their manual processing of outbound mail.

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# Jan's Letter

It's hard to believe it's summer. Over the past few months there have been many changes at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin has stepped down and has been replaced by Acting VA Secretary, Robert Wilkie. Although by all accounts, the transition has been smooth. In fact, in this newsletter we have two very positive initiatives coming out of the VA.

First, they are taking needed action to shore up communications with our Veterans as it relates to your benefits. Hopefully you are experiencing a difference in what was an antiquated system.

There is also good news for injured Veterans requiring rehabilitation and equipment – including prosthetic services. VA medical centers can now schedule appointments

directly with amputation care and wheelchair clinics, without having to first see a primary care provider.

It's frustrating for all of us at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law so see our Veterans waiting in lines and getting overlooked. In this issue of our newsletter we are proud to highlight a Veteran and Hearing Clerk, Chastity Ring. It's important for us to hire people that know what our Veterans go through. It gives us even more understanding, compassion and passion. We thank our Veterans for your service!

Sincerely,  
Jan Dils

Jan Dils brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. While her knowledge spans the critical areas pertaining to Personal Injury, Veterans' benefits, Social Security disability benefits and related appeals and claims, her practice remains focused on people, making sure you get the right answers and, above all, results.



## Spotlight Employee

### Chastity Ring

In this newsletter, we want to highlight someone that not only understands our side of the law, but the individuals she helps on a daily basis.

Chastity is a Veteran. Before joining the Army, she lived in Oregon and graduated from Klamath Union High School, in Klamath Falls, Oregon in 2002.

Beyond her service to our country, she studied Intelligence operations at Cochise College in 2009 and was working towards her accounting degree before being hired at Jan Dils. She is a VA Hearing Clerk at the firm.

She served in the Oregon and Texas Army National Guard from 2008 – 2014 as an Intelligence Analyst and from 2012 – 2014 had the thrilling opportunity to do her monthly drills at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (S.H.A.P.E) in Belgium while her husband, Bryan, was stationed there. Bryan is a native of West Virginia. He served in Afghanistan from 2010-2011 and was also stationed at S.H.A.P.E Belgium for four years.

The couple has two children: Alleeha (seven) and James (five). They also have two cats, one of which they rescued in Belgium.



## Office Inbox

### STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE

Want the scoop on what's new with our business and the team? You can find it right here, so stay plugged into the practice.

Lead VA Attorney **Heather Vanhooze** is celebrating 10 years with our firm. Congrats Heather!

VA Case manager **Megan Hutchinson** is expecting her second child soon.

Our VA C-File Team is happy to welcome five new Team Members: **Lacey Richards, Julie Balderson, Tasha Earl and Amanda Moellendick. Matt Landers** is transitioning from Social Security Leads and Intake to VA Leads and Intake.

We're also happy to welcome **Scott Riggs** to our VA Leads and Intake team.

Two members of Social Security Appeals are joining our VA team: **Robbie Milburn** is our New Case Management Support Specialist, and **Natalie Wagner** is moving to VA Records Reviewer.

## Community Spotlight

On March 24th, Team Jan Dils participated in the annual **Parkersburg, West Virginia Easter Parade**. A wonderful time was had by all! Our group marched and handed out water and coffee to attendees along the route. No city knows how to celebrate the holidays like Parkersburg. We love being a part of the communities we serve.



# The VA Announces Changes to Improve Delivery of Specialty Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services.

With a commitment to ensure Veterans receive quicker access to specialty rehabilitation services and equipment, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently implemented a rapid response team to expand staffing and training, increase communication directly with Veterans and improve processes to reduce and eliminate the backlog of pending requests for prosthetic items and services.

To improve Veterans' access to specialty rehabilitation services, enrolled patients at VA medical centers can now schedule appointments directly with amputation care and wheelchair clinics, without having to first see a primary care provider.

This means Veterans will not have to make an extra appointment and travel to a VA facility for a referral. Direct scheduling is currently available at 137 VA facilities for amputation care and at 124 VA facilities for wheelchair clinics. Additionally, same-day access for orthotist/prosthetist clinical services is available at 141 VA facilities.

"The dedication and support of the multi-disciplinary team of VA employees who are implementing these improvements demonstrate their commitment to do the right thing for our Veterans," said Robert Wilkie, Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "We are

focused on implementing the best solutions to modernize how we deliver rehabilitation and prosthetic services across all VA medical centers — ensuring Veterans nationwide are receiving timely and integrated health care and support."

As the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the country, VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service currently averages 638,000 new requests monthly across its health-care system for such items. The service provides a full range of equipment and services to Veterans, including artificial limbs and bracing, wheeled mobility and seating systems, sensory-neural aids (e.g., hearing aids, eyeglasses), implants and devices surgically placed in the Veteran (e.g., hips and pacemakers), and home respiratory care.

The VA is working to ensure Veterans are receiving their medical items, equipment and supplies sooner. Since June 2017, the total number of requests for prosthetic items pending for more than 30 days has been reduced by 72 percent.



As the VA continues to look for modern, simple ways to improve care for America's Veterans, additional process improvements for prosthetic and specialty rehabilitation services will be fully implemented at all VA medical centers in 2018. That is great news for so many Veterans who have sustained injuries – heroes fighting for our country.

Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=403306](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=403306)

## Word Game

A mumbo jumbo is a list of words/hints for you to unscramble. You then take designated letters from each word/hint to come up with the final message that is associated with each hint you have unscrambled.

PYPFU	<input type="checkbox"/>						
ATC	<input type="checkbox"/>						
SIFH	<input type="checkbox"/>						
RIDB	<input type="checkbox"/>						
TEAHRMS	<input type="checkbox"/>						
GIBLER	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Answers: puppy, cat, fish, bird, hamster, gerbil  
Final Message: FAMILY PETS

Move over French fries. Nothing goes better with a burger than **Smokey Grilled Sweet Potato Wedges** from our VA C-file Reviewer and our "Grill Queen," **Lacey Richards**. Pile them on!

### Ingredients:

- 20 ounces Sweet Potatoes, washed and dried
- 2 teaspoons Oil
- 1 tablespoon McCormick Pork Rub
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped Fresh Cilantro



**DIRECTIONS:** With the lid closed, reheat the grill to medium heat. Leaving the skin on, cut the sweet potatoes into large wedges, similar in size too thick cut steak fries. Transfer the cut sweet potatoes to a large baking sheet and drizzle with oil, tossing to coat evenly. Sprinkle half of the McCormick Pork Rub evenly over the oiled sweet potatoes. Flip and sprinkle the remaining rub on the other side. Remove the sweet potatoes from the baking sheet and transfer them directly onto the hot grill. Cook, with the lid, closed, for 3 - 4 minutes. Flip, and cook for an additional 3 - 4 minutes on the other side. Note: If the sweet potatoes are not tender enough after grilling both sides, transfer to a top rack in the grill, reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook until tender. Remove the sweet potatoes from the grill, transfer to the baking sheet previously used and sprinkle with cilantro. Serve.

## Important Veterans Benefits News For Everyone

1.877.VETERAN / FIGHT4VETS.COM



### PERSONAL INJURY ● VETERANS' BENEFITS ● SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

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*Continued from cover story*

Under CBCM, claims processors across the country now submit letters electronically to one central location for printing and distribution - allowing specialized employees to focus more time and energy assessing Veteran claims. In addition to improving productivity, CBCM also will help reduce maintenance requirements of hundreds of regional office printers, reduce the likelihood of returned mail through additional address verification and enhance the security and privacy of Veteran information through minimized handling of mail.

**Hopefully you are experiencing a difference? If so, this is why.**

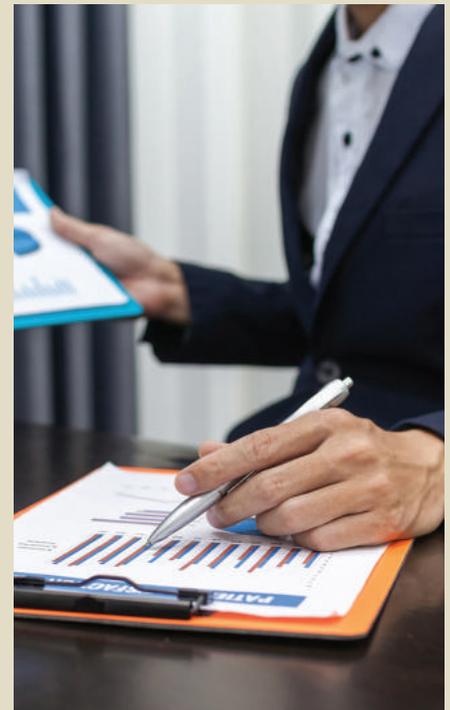
Over the past five years, VA has improved the way it processes compensation and pension claims enabling the development of CBCM.

**One central location for printing and distribution allows specialized employees to focus more time and energy assessing Veteran claims.**

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In the future, the VA will enhance CBCM's design to improve further VBA's methods of communication with Veterans by allowing them to choose between paper or digital correspondence. For more information or questions about CBCM, our Veterans can email [VAPublicAffairs@va.gov](mailto:VAPublicAffairs@va.gov)

Of course, if you have any questions about your compensation or need assistance navigating the system, never hesitate to give Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law a call at 877.526.3457. We are staunch advocates for the men and women who have selflessly served our country.



Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4035](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4035)